AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A process for manufacturing an electret article, comprising passing melt-extruded thermoplastic resin fibers through a mist space substantially formed from droplets of a polar liquid wherein the average diameter of said droplets is less than 20 μm, and then collecting the fibers, wherein said thermoplastic resin fibers contain electrical-chargeability enhancing agents, and wherein the fibers are not wetted upon passing through said mist space and are not subjected to a drying step after passing through said mist space~~, and the average diameter of said droplets is less than 20 μm~~.

2. (canceled).

3. (previously presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein a resin-droplet percentage of the formula:

(Wp/Wf) x 100

wherein Wp denotes the amount of said droplets forming said mist space and sprayed to a unit volume thereof within a certain period of time, and Wf denotes the amount of said melt-extruded thermoplastic resin passed through said mist space within a certain period of time is 500 or more.

4. (previously presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein a heated gas is blown onto said melt-extruded thermoplastic resin fibers.

5. (previously presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein a volume specific resistivity of said thermoplastic resin is $10^{14}\,\Omega\cdot$cm or higher.

6. (original): The process according to claim 5, wherein a volume specific resistivity of said thermoplastic resin is $10^{16}\,\Omega\cdot$cm or higher.

7. (previously presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein said polar liquid is water.

8. (previously presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein said electrical-chargeability enhancing agent is at least one compound selected from a group consisting of a hindered amine compound, a metallic salt of a fatty acid, a metallic oxide, and an unsaturated carboxylic acid-modified high-molecular compound.

9. (previously presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the average diameter of said droplets is 15 μm or less.

10. (currently amended): An apparatus for manufacturing an electric article, comprising (1) a means for melt-extruding a thermoplastic resin containing electrical-chargeability enhancing agents to form thermoplastic resin fibers; (2) a means for spraying droplets consisting essentially of a polar liquid to a space downstream of a direction of said thermoplastic resin extruded from said means for melt-extruding a thermoplastic resin, to thereby form a mist space,

the average diameter of said droplets being less than 20 μm; and (3) a means for collecting said thermoplastic resin fibers which have been passed through said mist space without subjecting said fibers to a drying step.